INNOVATIONS IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

The Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation and the Safe Passages Information System

In November 1999, more than 3,000 residents of the District of Columbia participated in a Citizens' Summit and established child well-being as the District's top priority. The FY2002 budget submission builds on the work begun by the Williams administration to meet the Citywide Strategic Plan's goal of strengthening children, youth and families.

The Safe Passages Plan

The plan that was developed and is being implemented to improve child well-being is appropriately called *Safe Passages*, reflecting the need to assure that the District's young people will have safe passages through childhood and healthy transitions into adulthood. The plan is based on three principles:

- Strong families build healthy children;
- Investments must be made in prevention of problems – instead of reacting only after a child or family is in crisis; therefore, the District must provide services and programs to prevent poor health, child abuse and neglect and juvenile crime, for example; and
- Supporting families and children requires creative collaboration among all stakeholders, including government, community-based service providers, advocates, faith-based groups, and the business and philanthropic communities, among others.

Objectives

The *Safe Passages* plan established five goals specifically related to children and families:

- Children are ready for school;
- Children and youth succeed in school;
- Children and youth live in healthy, stable and supportive families and environments;
- All youth make a successful transition into adulthood; and
- Youth choose healthy behaviors.

During the last two years, significant resources and programs have been developed or expanded in the District of Columbia in order to strengthen families, to support the development of healthy children and to meet the five goals listed above. A number of strategies have been implemented to achieve the plan's objectives, including the following:

- Implementing mandatory newborn hearing screenings;

- Establishing home visitation programs to check on infants and young children and provide information to parents;
- Establishing parent development centers;
- Adding new subsidized childcare slots;
- Enrolling more parents and children in the Healthy Families health insurance program;
- Constructing new recreation centers;
- Developing and expanding Roving Leaders and Youth Ambassadors programs, which are designed to mentor and prevent violence among youth;
- Setting up 21st Century Learning Centers;
- Establishing youth entrepreneurship programs;
- Expanding summer and year-round employment opportunities for youth;
- Creating family support and after-school programs through the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation; and
- Developing the Safe Passages Information System (SPIS).

In FY2002, the District will continue to implement these strategies and develop new ones. This chapter highlights two key elements of the overall initiative to strengthen children, youth and families:

- **The Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation**. A public/private partnership formed to develop and evaluate family support and out-of-school time programs; and
- **The Safe Passages Information System.** An electronic database that will combine and rationalize data from all the District's agencies that provide services to children, including the DC Public Schools. The system will enable the District to improve coordination of its service delivery and case management efforts across agencies and to begin to systematically track outcomes for the District's children.

The Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation

The Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation is an independent, nonprofit organization incorporated in June 1999 to increase the quality, quantity, and accessibility of services for children, youth, and families in the District of Columbia. The Corporation is the result of a partnership among the Mayor, the City Council, and community stakeholders, all of whom are committed to expanding services and improving outcomes for the District's children and families. The Mayor appoints four of the Corporation's board members and the City Council appoints three. Two members of the City Council are on the advisory committee to the Corporation.

The Corporation leverages public and private funds and disburses these funds through grants to the District's community organizations that provide direct services to children, youth, and their families. The Corporation was designed to address the issues identified in a citywide capacity and needs assessment conducted by the Urban Institute in 1999. The study examined demographic data as well as information on available programs and services and found that there was a substantial need for youth programs throughout most of the District and particularly in the neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River.

Objectives and Approaches

The following goals have been established for the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation's activities:

- To improve the well-being of children, families, and communities in the District of Columbia;
- To improve the quality and sustainability of community-based services for children and families; and
- To create a coordinated network of service providers who partner and collaborate to provide more effective services to children, youth, and families.

The decision to establish the Corporation in the private sector (instead of creating the grant-making function within the government's apparatus) was intentional. First, placement in the private sector means that the community can own and guide the initiative and tailor solutions that are responsive to the community's needs. Second, as an independent, nonprofit organization, the Corporation can operate more flexibly than government can. Finally, the Corporation can focus intensively on the business and philanthropic communities in its fund-raising activities. It should be noted that, unlike traditional grants management operations, the Corporation has remained lean, allotting only nine percent of its funds for overhead expenses, in contrast with the standard allowance of 15 percent.

The enabling legislation and the grant conveyance for the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation required completion of the following tasks during the first year of operations:

- Creating a framework for granting public funds;
- Granting funds to support program development in the areas of greatest need within the District;
- Designing and managing a performance-based funding process;
- Developing and implementing a system for capacity building that ensures quality programming by the grantees and local service providers;
- Initiating a process for managing data on programs for youth as well as on the youth receiving services; and
- Establishing annual outcomes and reporting progress to the community.

To date, the Corporation has made many performance-based grants; is providing capacity-building and technical assistance; and is in the process of developing an evaluation methodology.

Funding for the Corporation was delayed for several months because Congress did not initially approve the District's plan to use reserve funds to support the program. However, in August 2000, the Corporation received funding in the amount of $12 million from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. The box below provides a timeline noting significant events in the establishment of the Corporation.

The Corporation has focused its grant making and capacity-building in three areas:

- Parent education for early childhood development;
- Out-of-school time programming; and
- Youth entrepreneurship.

These areas are directly linked to achieving the five goals of the administration's *Safe Passages* plan:

Corporation Focus Area	Related Safe Passages Goal
Parent education for early childhood development	• Children are ready for school. • Children and youth live in healthy, stable and supportive environments.
Out of school time programs	• Children and youth succeed in school. • All youth make a successful transition into adulthood. • Youth choose healthy behaviors.
Youth entrepreneurship	• Children and youth succeed in school. • All youth make successful transition into adulthood. • Youth choose healthy behaviors.

In 2001, the Corporation will focus on completing outcome evaluations of the work of all its grantees. The FY2002 funding request for the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation is $5 million from TANF block grant funds. The Corporation is at a critical point in its development; funding in the FY2002 budget will solidify its position as it embarks upon evaluation of the funded programs and seeks to expand support from private sources.

Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation Milestones

June 1999	The DC City Council enacts the Children and Youth Initiative (Title XXIV of the Service Improvement and Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Support Act of 1999).
	The DC Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation is incorporated.
November 1999	The Corporation's Board of Directors is appointed.
January 2000	The Corporation issues a Request for Strategic Alliance Proposals for services in three areas: early childhood development strategies for parents; out-of-school time programs; and programs to promote youth entrepreneurship.
June 2000	The Corporation receives $12 million from the District of Columbia to fund grants.
August 2000	The Corporation awards grants to 37 organizations to provide services to children, youth, and families in the three focus areas.
September 2000	The Corporation grantees receive initial funding and program work begins.
October 2000	The Corporation begins a Pilot Outreach Program with 12 additional grantees to provide additional out-of-school time services and to expand capacity in the areas of greatest need.
January 2001	A draft report is completed describing the scope of an independent evaluation for the Corporation's activities.
March 2002	Projected date for initial results from independent evaluation.

Performance-Based Granting and Building Community Capacity

In the initial granting cycle, the Corporation gave out performance based grants totaling more than $7.3 million to programs in three areas described above: parent education for early childhood development ($1.3 million), out of school time programs ($4.5 million), and youth entrepreneurship ($1.5 million). Each grantee is required to develop a "program logic model" that clearly identifies the following:

- Resources the program is going to utilize (e.g., staff, funding, materials, etc.);
- Activities or services to be provided; and
- Specific initial, intermediate and longer-term outcomes expected from these interventions.

Figure 9-1
Program Category by Grant Amount
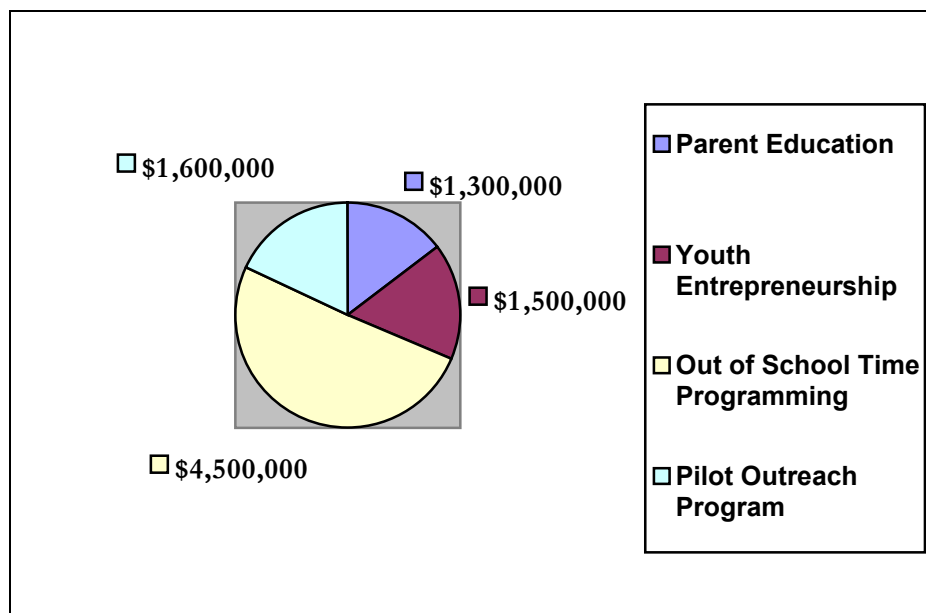
In addition, the Corporation initiated a Pilot Outreach Program ($1.6 million) to expand the capacity of service providers in the District's areas of greatest need. The initial targets for this Pilot Outreach program are east of the Anacostia River in Wards 6, 7 and 8. The Corporation selected 12 community-based organizations that would benefit from an assessment and from an individually designed technical assistance plan. These organizations will receive up to $100,000 over the course of the year, provided they meet agreed-on benchmarks for improvement and growth each month.

Figures 9-1 and 9-2 show how the funds were distributed and the numbers of children and families being served.

Recipients of Corporation grants include large and well-established service providers as well as organizations that are smaller and younger and operate at a more grass-roots level. The Corporation differs from typical funders in its focus on community capacity building – not just providing funds for programs – as a central part of its mission. Indeed, the Corporation provides intensive technical assistance and support to its grantees.

Figure 9-2
Number of Children/Families Served by Program Type
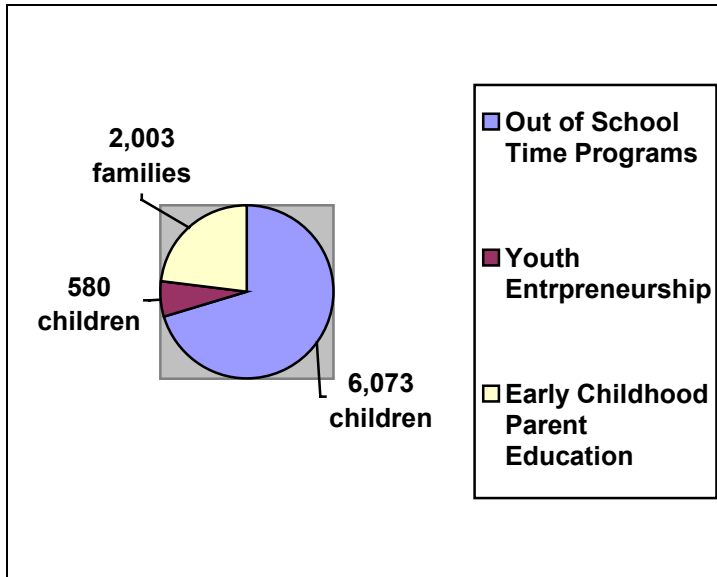
All the grantees meet monthly for a day of technical assistance focused on organizational development and/or program-specific content. The grantees in the Pilot Outreach Program also meet monthly for specialized and targeted technical assistance. This assistance concentrates on the basics, how to set up a financial system, for example, as well as on organizational development and program-specific content. Notably, the monthly technical assistance sessions are open to all service providers and stakeholders, not just to those who are current recipients of Corporation grants. Community-based organizations of all sizes and levels of effort are now communicating with one other and sharing practice. The Corporation has also developed and utilized a cadre of national experts to serve as resources for its grantees.

Parent Education for Early Childhood Development

The Early Childhood Family Support program area provides funds for community-based programs in all the city's eight wards (see Table 9-1 below). Each funded project seeks to empower parents and to build their ability to support their own children's growth and development. To date, more than 2,000 families have benefited from these services.

Table 9-1
Parent Education For Early Childhood Development

Grantee	Ward(s) of Service
Bright Beginnings	1
Mary's Center for Maternal & Child Care	6
Friendship House Association	1, 2, 4
Center for Mental Health	6, 7, 8
Center for Child Protection & Family Support	8
Community Academy Public Charter School	citywide

The Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation has approved the following performance outcomes to measure the impact of the programs funded in the initial granting cycles in the area of parent education for early childhood development:

- Increase in parents' engagement in and knowledge about methods for increasing child literacy and learning;
- Increase in children's rate of receiving appropriate health care services; and
- Increase in the number of children entering school with complete immunizations and health screenings.

Out of School Time Programs

The District is one of several jurisdictions focusing on out of school time programming as a strategy to improve outcomes for children and youth. Similar programming has been undertaken in Boston, San Diego, Chicago, Seattle, and Los Angeles. San Diego and Seattle are both in their fifth year of implementing an agenda that concentrates on children and youth. In both of these cities, after-school programming has remained a budgetary and programmatic priority, based on achievement of identified outcomes. The Los Angeles Unified School District, the largest urban school district in the country, has created a special Office of Out of School Time Programming to support the redirection of funds to this priority. Boston has focused its efforts on reducing youth violence through improved partnerships with the police and the faith community and through expanded out-of-school time programs. As a result, violence among youth has decreased dramatically in the last three years.

The range of programs funded by the Corporation encompasses all wards of the city and includes grassroots efforts as well as large institutions like The Shakespeare Theatre and the Smithsonian Institution working with small community-based organizations. Table 9-2, on next page, lists the grantees and the wards where services are being provided.

Table 9-2
Out Of School Time Programs

Grantee	Ward(s) of Service
Asian American LEAD	1
The Higher Achievement Program	1
Latin American Youth Center	1
Patricia M. Sitar Center for the Arts	1
For Love of Children (FLOC)	1, 2
Calvary Bilingual MLC	1, 2
New Community After School & Advocacy Program	1, 2
DC SCORES	1, 4, 5, 7
Chinatown Service Center	2
Community Academy Charter School/Kids House	4
Garfield Terrace Family Council	5
Washington Tennis & Education Foundation	5, 6, 7, 8
The Shakespeare Theatre	6
Anacostia Museum	6, 7, 8
The Fishing School	7
LifePieces to Masterpieces	7
ARCH	7, 8
Community Family Life Services	8
Lydia's House	8
Heads Up	1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Washington	citywide
City Lights School	citywide
Young Playwrights' Theater	citywide
Covenant Baptist Church (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
Ebenezer United Methodist (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
African Heritage Drummers (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
Project 2000 (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
RISE, Inc. (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
Northeast Performing Arts (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
Horton's Kids (Pilot Outreach Program)	7
Parklands Community Center (Pilot Outreach Program)	8
Allen Chapel A.M.E. Church (Pilot Outreach Program)	8
Emmanuel Baptist Church (Pilot Outreach Program)	8
Anna Johenning Baptist Church (Pilot Outreach Program)	8
Anna Johenning Baptist Center (Pilot Outreach Program)	8

The Corporation has approved the following performance indicators to measure the success of the programs funded in the initial grant cycle in the area of out-of-school time programming:

- Increased school attendance;
- Improved school grades and standardized-test scores;
- Increased movement from grade to grade;
- Decreased teen pregnancy; and
- Decreased contact with the juvenile justice system;

It is estimated that after school programs provided by DCPS (through funding from a TANF grant) serve approximately 10,000 young people. With the addition of the new or expanded programs funded by the Corporation, the number of young people being provided quality after-school and weekend services will increase to over 16,000.

Youth Entrepreneurship

Preparing young people to enter the world of post-secondary education and careers is perhaps the strongest economic development strategy the District can undertake. Youth entrepreneurship programs are designed to provide support for young people making the transition to adulthood. The skills required for this transition are more complex than ever before. The unique set of programs being funded in five of the eight wards ranges from a small computer repair training program for young Asian Pacific Americans at the Chinatown Services Center to a collaborative effort between Wider Opportunities for Women and For Love of Children.

These unique training models are serving more than 580 young people in the District. Table 3 below lists the grantees in the area of youth entrepreneurship and the wards where the services are being provided.

Table 9-3
Youth Entrepreneurship

Grantee	Ward(s) of Service
Columbia Heights Youth Club	1
Brain Food, Inc.	1, 2
Chinatown Service Center	2
Wider Opportunities for Women	5
Covenant House Washington	7
Marshall Heights CDC	7
Lydia's House	7, 8
WVSA Arts Connection	citywide

The Corporation has approved the following outcomes as measures of success in this program area:

- Increased enrollment in GED or other educational programs;
- Decreased contact with the juvenile justice system;
- Increased school attendance;
- Improved school grades and standardized-test scores;
- Increased movement from grade to grade; and
- Decreased teen pregnancy.

Evaluation

With input from the community, the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation has begun to develop an evaluation methodology and is seeking additional citywide input on the strategy. The proposed evaluation framework is currently available for public review and comment on the Corporation's web site, www.cyitc.org.

The proposed evaluation will focus on answering five major questions (and many sub-questions):

1. *Has the work of the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation improved services and outcomes for children, families and communities in the District of Columbia?* Compared to a baseline, how has the Corporation influenced outcomes for children and families who participated in the programs? Has the number of children served increased? Has the quality of services increased for programs funded by the Corporation? Are community-level outcomes improving in areas where the Corporation is funding programs? Are citywide indicators for children and families improving (such as the Kids Count indicators) and to what extent do Corporation programs affect citywide indicators?

2. *Has the work of the Corporation improved the sustainability of community-based services for children and families?* How well is the Corporation developing the ability of community-based organizations to sustain quality services during and beyond the grant period? How well are public and private funds being leveraged to support community-based services for children and families? How effective is the Corporation's model for developing community capacity and taking programs to scale in the District?

3. *Has the Corporation created a coordinated network of service providers in partnership with and collaborating with one another?* How good is the coordinated network that has been created? Are District government agencies, the Corporation, and community-based service providers collaborating with one another effectively? Is this collaboration and partnering effective in improving service capacity, quality, and sustainability? What is the overlap between Corporation-funded services and other types of services?

4. *How well are the community-based organizations funded by the Corporation providing quality services and what are the key factors in determining whether quality services are provided?* What are the grantees' goals for participant outputs and outcomes and how well are they meeting these goals?

Are these goals consistent with the child and family outcomes established by the Corporation? What are the obstacles that grantees face in achieving their goals? How can the Corporation improve the supports needed for grantees to meet these goals? What standards for program quality are being used? Are they being achieved? Are grantees using data to inform their activities? Are they sharing the data? What are the costs per participant served and how do they vary across programs? Are children and parents involved in program improvements and are their opinions being taken into account? What are parents and children's expectations for programs and are they being met? How much do parents know about the programs in which their children participate? What is the impact of grantee program staff on program quality? What successes and problems are grantees experiencing with recruiting, training, and retaining quality staff?

5. *How well have the internal activities of the Corporation been carried out in order to meet its goals and the goals of grantees?* How well has the Corporation assisted community-based service providers in achieving their goals? How well has the Corporation met the organizational and program needs of grant recipients? How useful are the Corporation's specific methods (such as holding monthly meetings, providing technical assistance) for promoting positive outcomes for program participants, sustainability, capacity building, and a coordinated service provider network? How well has the Corporation established and met its own organizational goals? How well has the Corporation gathered and compiled data and made the information accessible to community-based organization, the public, and others? Has the Corporation promoted non-traditional, positive, and progressive outcomes and service delivery paradigms?

The grantees and the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation itself will be evaluated and decisions will be made about future funding and strategies based on achievement of the results listed above.

Summary

The Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation has significantly increased support to parents and youth services in the District. In addition to its initial granting and community capacity-building efforts, the Corporation has leveraged the funds provided through the DC Government to raise additional private dollars. In its first year, the Corporation has already raised $500,000 in private funds to support its on-going work. In November 2000, the Corporation joined the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, the Community Foundation, and DC Agenda and convened national grant makers and local foundations to highlight the progress the city has made and to highlight the need for a return of national dollars to our nation's capital. The Corporation is also a part of the finalist team for a $5 million Hewlett-Packard Technology Village Project.

The District is at a critical point in terms of the need to institutionalize its commitment to investing in its youth and providing support to parents. The request for $5 million in the FY2002 budget for the Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation will solidify the District's commitment and place the Corporation in a position to leverage more private funding. For this reason, the Mayor and the Council should work to identify at least an additional $5 million from other sources.

The Safe Passages Information System

The Mayor's commitment to improving services, opportunities and outcomes for children and youth recognizes the importance of the following:

- Improving our assessments of children's needs;
- Improving the coordination and tracking of services within and across agencies;
- Monitoring and tracking the use of service; and
- Systematically tracking outcomes for the children served.

To help accomplish these goals, the District has begun developing an interagency, electronic database and case management system called the Safe Passages Information System (SPIS). Ultimately, SPIS will link information from all agencies that serve the District's children, including, but not limited to, (1) the Department of Health (including Medicaid, vital statistics, and immunizations programs, etc.); (2) the Department of Human Services (including child care, early child development, and the juvenile justice systems); (3) the Child and Family Services Agency (child abuse and neglect/foster care system); (4) the District of Columbia Public Schools; and (5) the Commission on Mental Health Services.

The information system will provide a comprehensive view of what services a child is (or is not) receiving across the city and will track outcomes related to health, safety, welfare, and academic progress. Coupled with staff retraining, SPIS will support increased collaboration, cooperation, and team building among District agencies that are serving the same children and families.

The Current Problem

Currently, there is no comprehensive repository of information pertaining to services provided to children and youth or to the outcomes achieved. For example, a child might be receiving services from the special education program and be known to the child welfare and juvenile justice systems; yet there is no single comprehensive database that contains all relevant information about the child and what services have been provided. Furthermore, the fact that these systems do not use a common identifier (i.e., case number) complicates matters when staff members do try to share information.

Many children in the District interact with several City agencies in order to receive services. At best, information sharing among staff at different agencies is informal, inconsistent, and idiosyncratic; at worst, it is non-existent. These agencies use multiple information systems to record and retrieve information about their clients. Their systems vary widely in terms of sophistication, usability, and reliability. Real and perceived barriers related to confidentiality sometimes prevent agencies from sharing the information they have.

The District has no standard process for agencies to share and coordinate information to assist the service providers in delivering services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Inadequate information and documentation hamper efforts to plan and evaluate improvements to the service system. Currently, there is no way to systematically, quickly, and efficiently track the District's expenditures on behalf of children – either in the aggregate or on a per-child basis. Public agencies have limited capacity for monitoring and documenting service utilization and outcomes and for planning new service capacity. Inadequate utilization and financial data contribute to the District's failure to maximize

reimbursement revenues. Conservative estimates of additional federal revenue for which the District may be eligible in the area of child and family services exceed $40 million.

Lessons from Other Jurisdictions

Several jurisdictions, including Florida, Delaware, and Fairfax County, Virginia, have developed or are developing cross-agency information systems in order to improve their ability to track services for children and their outcomes. The District has visited some of these jurisdictions to see the systems first-hand and to learn about the strategies that have been implemented. Key lessons include the following:

- It takes five to six years to plan and implement a system of this magnitude and complexity.
- Full implementation of these kinds of systems requires consistent funding and a long-term, sustained commitment on the part of all stakeholders.
- Most systems combine data from multiple databases and include case management, program, and executive reporting and payment functions.
- Off the shelf software may be used (as opposed to a custom-made system), but it requires substantial tailoring.

In addition to learning about which technological approaches work best, the District has heard consistently from other jurisdictions about the importance of implementing a strategy to bring about the culture change that is necessary to encourage staff from multiple agencies to share information and work together as a matter of course. Indeed, the Safe Passages inter-agency planning group is committed to getting all stakeholders to buy in to a collaborative approach to serving children and families. In addition, the group is identifying legislative and other changes required to manage confidentiality and other sensitive issues.

It should be noted that the scope of the Safe Passages Information System is ambitious and goes beyond that of the systems used in most other jurisdictions. Other jurisdictions have generally combined databases from agencies within one department; for example, Delaware combined its juvenile justice, child welfare and mental health systems into one department and created an integrated data system. The District's plan is to incorporate data from systems that service children—including the health system, the social services system and the school system. In all, approximately 15 District agencies serve children and youth and have data systems (either automated or manual) to manage the delivery of services. In addition, many of these agencies have multiple programs addressing the needs of children as well as program-specific data systems.

Proposal for the District of Columbia

The District is developing the SPIS in phases over a five-year period. The first phase, completed in October 2000, demonstrated the feasibility of integrating data from separate databases from DC Public Schools, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Health. The program concentrated on children receiving special education services. This initial pilot was successful in testing the method and technology involved in building such an integrated data repository. The pilot also demonstrated that it is, indeed, possible to match and combine data from these disparate information systems.

In the second phase of the project, a fully operational data repository is being built, tested, and implemented. Work in developing this repository is supported by extensive interagency collaboration among agencies to examine and improve their methods of collecting and

sharing information about their young clients. The first children whose records will be incorporated into the repository are those served by the Early Intervention Program in the Office of Early Childhood Development. Subsequent phases of the SPIS will gradually expand the populations and agencies whose records are incorporated in the data repository. A common case identifier will be developed to avoid confusion when multiple agencies are involved in the same case. Access to the system will be carefully managed to assure that the information is used appropriately.

After the second phase is completed, agency personnel and authorized stakeholders will begin to use the repository to improve their services to children and families. The benefits are expected to multiply as more and more agencies are incorporated into the system. By adding one system at a time, the District will be able to learn from its experiences and make course corrections as new data systems are incorporated.

The subsequent phase will also identify additional opportunities for expanding and enhancing the system as the various interagency and specialty work groups continue to examine the processes involved in serving children, youth and their families. The system will also include options for customized reporting and analysis.

Four standing working groups and numerous ad hoc special teams have been working under the guidance of a Leadership Group consisting of designated agency representatives. These groups identify, analyze and resolve issues affecting long-term improvements in interagency collaboration dealing with gathering and sharing information.

- The Legislative and Policy Team was formed to address the legislative and policy changes needed to enable agencies to share data with one another and collaborate more effectively. The team reviewed standing interagency agreements and has recommended enhancements; it also advises the developers on key guidelines affecting data access and utilization. This team will develop Memoranda of Understanding and legislative proposals to support the implementation of SPIS.
- The Business Process Team develops and documents ways to exchange information in order to enhance services. This team focuses on processes for the exchange of data (for example, updating the repository) as well as processes for staff use of the system.
- The Change Management Team helps promote the culture change that is needed between and within agencies to promote collaborative services. The team facilitates change by developing and implementing communication, training, and other strategies. This team also develops measures for evaluating the impacts and overall success of the initiative.
- The Technology Team examines, documents, and evaluates the District's current technical infrastructure in order to identify gaps in the system and to determine the technical infrastructure that will be needed in the future to enable successful implementation of SPIS. In addition, the team recommends and ensures selection and installation of appropriate software and hardware.

During FY2002, SPIS will be expanded by:

- Developing additional analysis and requirements to prepare for full implementation;
- Increasing the number of records incorporated into the system;
- Further integrating databases and data entry systems;

- More fully defining and testing requirements as agency collaboration evolves; and
- Evaluating the appropriateness of and necessity for custom-made versus off-the-shelf software applications.

Summary

The Safe Passages Information System will have many benefits for District agencies and, ultimately, for the city's children and youth. SPIS will do the following:

- Provide a comprehensive picture of services provided to children and youth;
- Support and promote coordinated case management across agencies;
- Support and promote seamless, unduplicated service delivery;
- Allow the city to systematically monitor and report on outcomes for children and youth across agencies; and
- Enable the District to increase revenue from federal reimbursements.

In addition, by streamlining work processes, SPIS will make it possible for staff to focus more directly on children and their families. Finally, SPIS will also serve as a useful management tool for monitoring and evaluating both agency and staff performance because the system will provide faster and better access to critical information that administrators, supervisors, and policymakers can easily use for this purpose.

The Safe Passages Information System is a fundamental component of the Mayor's overall strategy to improve the lives of children and youth. An effort of this magnitude requires consistent leadership and funding if it is to move forward and achieve its objectives.